

Government and Law

should strike the next man and the blow would entail a fight and 67/
blood. Women should walk the length of a distaff apart—they usually
spin as they go—lest a blow given should draw their men into a fight.

Neither man nor woman must pass between two persons who have 67/
just been speaking together, for (? in some occult manner) this will 576
cause them to quarrel. So strong is this belief that once in a small hut
a woman gripped me by the shoulder, dragged me out, and squeezed
herself between me and the wall in order to avoid passing between
me and Marko, where there was plenty of room. Lek, I was told, had
so ordained. I like to think that he did his best by means of house-
burning and fines to diminish the very ancient custom of "blood," and
that he did not deserve the Pope's excommunication.

As we have seen, house-burning and fine are the only punishments 68/
under the Canon. Nevertheless, by decree of the council of the whole 627
tribe the death penalty can be inflicted. In February 1912 an amazing
case of wholesale justice was reported to me which had recently taken
place in Mirdita. A certain family of the Fandi bairak had long been
notorious for evil-doing—robbing, shooting, and being a pest to the
tribe. A gathering of all the heads condemned all the males of the family
to death. Men were appointed to lay in wait for them on a certain day
and pick them off; and on that day the whole seventeen of them were
shot. One was but five and another but twelve years old. I protested
against thus killing children who must be innocent and was told: [827]
"It was bad blood and must not be further propagated." Such was
the belief in heredity that it was proposed to kill an unfortunate woman
who was pregnant, lest she should bear a male and so renew the evil.
Three shots which missed were fired at her; she rushed to a man and [671]
called on him to protect her. He took her under his besa and she
was spared.

A case of private "justice," though it took place in South Albania 68/
at Postenani, a small isolated village, and so is not connected with the 183
Canon of Lek, is so singular that it should be recorded. I stayed some
days at the village and, when leaving, a crowd gathered to see me start.
When we were on the way my guide asked if I had noticed a woman
who had stood near the door; I had not. He said it was a pity, as she
was a very brave woman and had saved her husband. They owned a
house and some land; a child was born to them, and all went well till
her husband's brother arrived. He was a bad man, and demoralized
the village, not only by starting gambling with card games, but by [525]
drinking and teaching very vicious practices to the youth. The woman
with dismay saw her husband taken with the gambling craze, playing
away his goods, and nearing ruin. Then the child was ill. She prayed
her husband to send for a doctor; but the nearest was a whole day's

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and a fringe is made of hair combed forward over the shaven area. 585
The shaven temple makes the face look very wide.

In order to promote fertility, among the Dukagini it was not [582]
uncommon to keep a pair of goats or sheep penned in the corner of
the living-room, even when it was at the top of a tall tower and some
twenty people lived in it.

On marriage, no kind of privacy is observed. Bride and bridegroom [592]
take their place in the common apartment.

A colossal feast is usual at a wedding, and in the old days it might
last several days. A Djakovan friend told me that three oxen, fifteen
sheep, and God knows how many fowls had been eaten at his. At all
weddings any amount of firing takes place. The tribesman goes on
shooting so long as he has a cartridge left, for sheer joy of the "pop-
bang." One man I knew fired his whole stock of six hundred cartridges.

Weddings in the Towns.—In Scutari I was guest at two Catholic
weddings. The bridegroom saw the bride for the first time in church.
She was brought in closely veiled and unveiled only before the altar.
Weddings were always on a Monday or Saturday—usually a Monday.
"It would be most inconvenient to marry on any other day," was the
sole explanation findable.

This is what took place: The marriage had been arranged by the 584
relatives on each side after long conferences. On Sunday afternoon
I was invited to the bridegroom's house to see the "gifts." No bride- 583
price in money is paid. Four Scutari ladies in full dress sat on the floor
at one end of the room and three men at the other, in charge of the 585
"gifts." These were always the same, and varied only in quality according
to the bridegroom's means. The "gifts" were a pair of boots, a pair
of slippers, and four boxes of scented soap (or perfume), which were
in charge of the men. The ladies watched over a large red silk hand- [291]
kerchief, a pair of white cotton stockings (with pink suspenders sewn
on a card, a greatly admired novelty), a pair of scissors, needles and
pins in a casket, a distaff to make her a good housewife, and a handsome [301]
necklace of large silver-gilt coins, set in filigree. This is called the
"dupa." It is worn by all married women, and is sometimes of gold
and very valuable. No doubt it represents the bride-price.

The boots had high gilt heels, yellow uppers, pink elastic sides, [291]
and patent-leather toes, embroidered minutely with wreaths of flowers.
They were filled with sweetly scented flowers, that the bride's path on
earth might be sweet. We admired the gifts and awaited the arrival
of the relative who was to take them to the bride. He arrived with
several others; and they dragged from another room the bridegroom,
who resisted strongly because "he was so shy." Bride and bridegroom [576]
have to assume a superhuman modesty.

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make acquaintance with the family into which he has married. Again⁵⁸⁵ the party is divided into "buck-herds and doe-herds." The husband⁵⁷⁴ enters the ladies' room and embraces all of his new female relations, except his wife, whom modesty compels to turn away. He sups with the family and goes home alone. Next day the bride is brought back to his house and the same pantomime of extreme reluctance is gone through. She comes home usually in a carriage. I was told that formerly it was etiquette for her to come on foot, but only inch by inch, so that her return from a house round the corner might perhaps take hours. She visits her family thus at week-ends for several months, but only on the first occasion is a carriage and ceremony necessary. ^[576]

A bridegroom, while I was in Scutari, revolted against the midnight ceremony, and turned all the guests out of his house after the feast. In spite of her assumed modesty the bride was deeply hurt at being thus deprived of publicity. She complained to her parents, who angrily asked why their daughter should have been thus insulted. Was she not good enough to show as his wife to his friends in the usual manner? Nor could they see that in this case the bridegroom's modesty had been real and not assumed.

He was in the unusual position of having a house of his own. In most⁵⁹¹ cases the young couple lives in the house of the bridegroom's parents⁵⁹² in the town and has a separate room. The parents rule and control the household, and the bride is often very hard-worked. The emigrants returned from America have brought new ideas and the system is breaking down.

Much of the above ceremony resembles Roman practice. The distaff, the casket of household implements, the throwing of sweets, sprinkling of water, epithalamia, the *patria potestas* also.

The girls of a family must be married according to age—the eldest⁵⁸² first, and so on. The origin of this is perhaps that formerly infant betrothals were almost universal and girls were sent to their husbands so soon as old enough.

In Scutari, and, I believe, in the other towns, the daughters, or at least one of them, must be married before the sons can be married. The explanation offered was that the daughters must be dowered, and the sons cannot marry till they have helped earn the dowries. Over these wedding outfits the parties are very exacting. The bride-⁵⁸³ groom's family bargains for every stitch of the garments and stipulates as to their quality. While I was in Scutari a betrothed man, who had always worn Albanian costume, went to work abroad and dressed *à la Française*. He wrote home to say he now required drawers that could be worn under trousers, and his fiancée, who had already finished I forget how many dozen voluminous Albanian garments, had all her

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blue haze; above us were forested slopes, and 000
above them sheer, great cliffs throwing shadows
across a dozen valleys. Our small grassy knoll
was white with daisies and with fallen petals
from a blossoming apple tree that arched above
the cross. On it our men lay at ease, beautiful,
graceful animals, their rifles swung from their
shoulders and laid ready to their hands.

"Why are Shala and Shoshi in blood?" Frances 628
asked, casually, biting idly at the stem of a 576
daisy. Perolli did not know; he had gathered
only the fact that there was a feud.

"Do we go through both tribes?" I wanted to
know.

"Through Shala. Shoshi's farther down the
river. We'll go around it."

"Are our men Shala or Shoshi?"

Perolli glanced at them. "Shala, by the pat-
tern of the braiding on their trousers. So we
won't have any trouble — Hello! That's a Sho-
shi man coming up the trail, now."

It was Alex who acted quickest. She was sit-
ting on a rock beside me, her arms clasped about
her knees; she rose instantly and, flinging out a
hand in the gesture of greeting, cried in her most
feminine voice those Albanian words that sound
like, "Tune yet yetta!" and mean, "May you
live long!"

The Shoshi man's hand was on his rifle, but
his step had not faltered. He replied, coming on
steadily, and the appropriateness of the greeting
struck me, for if it had not been uttered by a

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[628] woman he would at that moment have been
576 dead. Our Shala men, with perfect courtesy, went through the formalities of greeting on the trail, and this is the form, translated to me by Rexh:

"Long life to you!"

"And to you, long life!"

"How could you?" meaning, "How could you get here?"

"Slowly, slowly, little by little."

No one who has ever seen those trails can doubt it.

291. The Shoshi man sat down, our men offered him cigarettes, and up the trail came a woman of Shoshit. She wore a tight, bell-shaped skirt of horizontal black and white stripes, made of cloth heavier and thicker than felt, the twelve-inch-wide marriage belt of heavy leather studded with pounds of nails, and a jacket covered with three-inch-thick fringe. Two heavy braids of black hair hung forward on her breasts, a colored handkerchief was bound around her head, and her face, smoothly weather browned, large eyed, delicately shaped, was the most beautiful that I [854] had ever seen. On her back, held by woven woolen straps that crossed between her breasts, was a cradle tightly covered by a thick blanket; [283] in one hand she held a bunch of raw wool, and from the other dangled a whirling spindle. Her feet were bare, and as she came up that trail which had exhausted me she sang softly to herself, dexterously spinning thread from the bunch of wool.

2 [Albanian Mountain tribe -- [12] Analysis]

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Cheremi, our gayer gendarme, rose quickly⁵⁷⁶ and went to meet her. He took her by the hand and laid his cheek caressingly against hers. He was like a child, Cheremi, with his happy face, deep wrinkled with laughter, the mischievous twinkle in his eyes, his bursts of wit and song. But he looked all of his forty years as he gazed tenderly at the woman of Shoshi.

"She is a woman of my people," he said, leading her gallantly to us.

"Are you a woman?" said Frances Hardy, correctly, in Albanian.

"I am born of Shala¹ married in Shoshi," she⁵⁹¹ answered. Her voice was soft, and her hands and feet would have been madness to a sculptor. In any Paris restaurant those slender fingers, almond nails, and delicate wrists, aristocratic, well bred, would have been a sensation.

We admired the baby, excavating it from five^[354] folds of blankets to do so. How they live beneath the smothering I do not know; a Western baby would die in three hours. We asked the mother how old she was. Eighteen, she said, and she had been married three years.

"And have you been home since?"

"Ah no," she said, with a wistful smile.

"Born in Shala," said Cheremi. "But she was married in Shoshi, and in Shoshi she will die."

"I wonder what she thinks of us," I said, for,⁰⁰⁰ though she must have felt great curiosity about these strange beings, dropped apparently from the sky upon her well-known trails, she did not

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○○○ "He is a good man, and brave," said the bishop, "and little Sokoi will be a great one."

At noon the rain was still pouring from apparently inexhaustible skies, but Cheremi, Rexh, and Perolli assumed, as a matter of course, that we would go on; the difficulty was that there [36] were no mules. There should have been a mule in the village, whose houses were scattered, miles apart, all the way down the deep-walled gorge to the banks of the River Shala, twenty-five miles away, but when Cheremi hastened lightly up a twelve-hundred-foot peak and cried to the farthest house that we wanted mules, the answer came back that there were none since the war.

So he found an aged man—seventy-five years old, he was, but still agile and bright eyed—and put our packs on his back, and at noon we started out on foot, with fresh-peeled staffs provided by Rexh, and new-baked corn bread in the saddlebags.

576 After an hour of desperate climbing we stood
202 on the peak from which Cheremi had telephoned. The bishop's house and the school lay dwarfed beneath our feet, and Perolli, standing on a rock and holding his ears, sent down to them a shrill hail. "Ooeooo! Monseignor!"

The bishop appeared in his woolen gown, a rifle in his hand, and all the guns in our party went off at once, and again, and again, while fifty miles of sheer rock cliffs barked back at them. My hands were over my ears, but I saw the three answering white puffs from the bishop's [Pultit, in Albanian] [33] Mountains -- Analyst]

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576 rifle, and while the echoes were dying, still
202 repeating themselves down the valley, we saw
him hand it to his servant and protect his ear-
drums with his thumbs. His call came up to us,
"Go on a smooth trail!"

"Now," said Perolli, thrusting his revolver
back into its holster, "we have said good-by
to the bishop. *Allons!*"

∞ "And to-night," I said, joyously, "we'll sleep
in a native house."

Frances and Perolli did not seem enthusiastic
about that hope, and as we toiled up trails that
were stairways of giant boulders, or slid down
slopes of pale-green shale, above valleys where
the clouds swirled beneath us, the discussion con-
tinued fragmentarily.

Frances's reluctance I could ascribe to the
shrieking of her muscles, which, if tortured as
mine had been by the previous day's travel,
must be screaming with agony at her every step.
But Perolli, true Albanian in spite of his years
of living in foreign capitals, was as fresh as the
crisp air that blew upon us between the gusts of
driving rain. He leaped up boulders, he joined
in the singing of the others, who, with sixty-
pound sacks on their backs, walked easily up the
incredible steeps, their thumbs at their ears,
chanting songs of ancient battles with the Turks.

"Don't you think it safe to stay in a native
house?" said I, remembering that he was an
officer of the government traveling incognito
among unfriendly tribes, and that within sight

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000 were the Albanian mountains held by the Serbs who had put a price on his head.

576 "Safe?" said he, scornfully. "A man is always
627 safe in another man's house. It has happened not once, but often, in these mountains, that a man has given shelter to a hunted man and found, while the guest sat at his fire, that he was harboring a man who had shot the son of the house not an hour before. The neighbors bring in the body, and the father sits beside it, with the murderer under his roof. And the father gives him coffee and food and drink and rolls cigarettes for him, until the guest is ready to go, and then he accompanies him for an hour's journey, so that none of the tribe can injure him, and says a courteous farewell to him on the trail. 'Go on a smooth road,' he says. 'There is a word of peace between us for a day and a night because you are my guest. After that I will follow you all my life, until I kill you.'"

I began to see the exquisite, infinite complications of that system of law and order, the Law of Lec, which guides these people in all their actions, and I thought, "This goes back beyond the Middle Ages," remembering the old Bible stories of the time when men lived similarly, under the laws of Moses.

000 But already the sense of perspective in time was growing dim; we were living in the past, not thinking of it, and the scores of future centuries in which men would spread over Europe, invent private property, build great cities and

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000 with four strangers from far away and with a Mohammedan youth of Scutari. To-night Cheremi will be in Plani. I will say to Lulash that he may bring to Cheremi in Plani the hundred kronen which he owes him."

• [576] "Oo-EE-OO-OO!" The final shrill call came circling back among the peaks like ripples of disturbed water, and up through its circling came the answering call of the woman. Since he had been telephoning to a woman, Cheremi did not fire his rifle three times, for which my ears were grateful.

We went on. And once, as I clambered up the side of a rock pile that the child of a giant might have made in building a tower with blocks, my staff (ah, how grateful I was for that third leg!) dislodged a stone the size of my head, and Cheremi, turning like a cat, flung himself downward and caught it as it tottered on the trail's edge. Then I looked and saw, far below, the miniature images of a woman and a cradle, set among moving white spots that were sheep, and I saw that the rock would have gone down the slope like a bomb from an airplane and struck the cradle beside which the woman was sitting, and, I thought, spinning.

628 "One must be careful on the trails," said Cheremi, and as the men at that moment had finished a song with a joyous fusillade of rifle shots, I asked if people were not sometimes killed by stray bullets. Perolli said that of course it happened now and then, but everyone under-

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Perolli, and to us in English: "His father has⁵⁷⁴ sent him to ask us to come to his house. What do you think?"

"Is anyone going to think?" we cried. "There'll be a fire, won't there?"

We followed the boy up the mountain side, our lungs sobbing and our feet slipping on the trail dimly lighted by the torch, and so steep that the palms of our hands were bruised by climbing it. Out of the ceaseless swishing murmur of falling water that had surrounded us all day one note rose above the rest; flying spray was like a mist on our faces; we were following the edge of a waterfall hidden by the dark. Then⁵⁷⁴ the trail turned; we stood on a level ledge; and⁵⁷⁶ suddenly all the rifles in the world seemed to go off not ten feet away.

"It's all right!" Perolli's shout came up from the darkness beneath our feet. "They're only welcoming you!" But I have never felt so defenseless, so nakedly exposed to sudden death, as I did standing there, clutching Frances and Alex, while sharp flashes darted out of the blackness and deafening explosions contended with more deafening echoes. All the household of Marke Gjouni stood on the trail, every man firing his rifle until it was empty. Then a woman appeared with a torch, her beautiful face and two heavy braids of hair painted on the darkness like a Rembrandt, if Rembrandt had ever used a model from ancient Greece, and we made our way through a jumble of greetings ("May you

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574 live long! May you live long!" we repeated),
[576] and up a flight of stone steps along the side of a blank stone wall, and through a low, arched stone doorway.

The stone-walled room was large—as large as the house itself—and low ceilinged, and filled with shadows. Near the farther end, on the stone floor, a bonfire burned in a ring of ashes. In the corner near the door several goats and two kids and two sheep stopped their browsing on a heap of dry-leaved branches, and looked at us with large eyes shining in the torchlight. Five or six women came out of the shadows to greet us, and behind us the men were coming in, reloading their rifles, hanging them on pegs, closing and bolting the heavy wooden door.

Rexh and our two gendarmes were already busy unrolling the packs, spreading our blankets over heaps of dried grass on the other side of the fire. In a moment we were sitting comfortably on them, extending wet feet toward the flames, while one of our hosts put a fresh armful of brush on the coals, another hacked slivers of pitch pine from a great knot of it and set them blazing in a small wrought-iron basket that hung from the ceiling, and another, with hollowed-out wooden bowls of coffee, of sugar, and of water around him, began making Turkish coffee in a tiny, long-handled iron bowl set in the hot ashes.

"We're going to have a night in a native house, after all," said I, happily, and added, starting, "What's that?" A long, thin, curiously un-

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291 ¹ There were ten or twelve children—little girls half naked, with serious, beautiful faces and long-lashed brown eyes; small boys dignified in little long tight trousers of white wool beautifully braided in black, short fringed black jackets, and colored sashes and turbans like those of their [854] fathers. Two cradles stood near the fire, covered tightly over high footboards and headboards with heavy blankets; presently a woman partly uncovered one and, kneeling, offered her breast to the tiny baby tied down in it. Only the baby's puckered little face showed; arms and legs tightly bound, it lay motionless and uncomplaining, and when it was fed the mother kissed it tenderly and covered it again, carefully smoothing the many folds of thick wool and tucking the ends tightly beneath the cradle.

576 Meantime Cheremi was taking off our shoes and stockings and bathing our feet in cold water brought by one of the women. This was proper, since when guests arrive the member of the family nearest to them by ties of blood or affection acts as their servant, and Cheremi, being an Albanian who knew us, was judged to stand in that position. By the time we had drawn on dry woolen stockings from our packs the first 576 cup of coffee was ready. To the boiling water in 272 the tiny pot the coffee maker added two spoonfuls of the powdered coffee, two of sugar, stirred the mixture till it foamed, and poured it into a handleless little cup which he offered Perolli. But Perolli indicated me, and without the 4 [In home of Marke [58] Gjanni of Pulht-Andyst]

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576 slightest revelation of his surprise the host
272 changed his gesture.

"Beauty and good to you," said I, in Albanian, prompted by Perolli, and when I had drunk the thimbleful, "Good trails!" said I, handing back the cup. For this is the manner in which one
273 drinks coffee. Do not make the mistake, when
576 next you are in the Albanian mountains, of saying the same things when you are offered rakejia. For rakejia there is a quite different form of courtesies. And as soon as the coffee cup, rinsed and refilled with freshly made coffee, has been given to each guest in turn, you will be offered rakejia.

Alex and Frances and I looked at one another, but we drained the large goblet of colorless liquid fire in turn, without a word of protest. It might have been the water that it looked like, so far as it affected our minds or tongues, for I continue to ascribe to the fire warmth and the blessed sensation of resting after those trails the sense of contentment that filled us all.

○○○ "Strange," I said, for I still dimly remembered another way of life, as though, perhaps, I had sometime dreamed it, "chimneys that don't draw make so much smoke in a room, yet here there is no chimney and a large fire, and we don't notice the smoke." And, leaning back on the piled blankets, I gazed up at the pale-blue clouds of it, rising beyond the firelight into a velvety darkness overhead. But I really felt that I had always lived thus, shut off by stone walls from the mountains and the night, ringed around by

CHAPTER V

THE UNEARTHLY MARRIAGE OF THE MAN OF IPEK —FIRST NIGHT IN A NATIVE ALBANIAN HOUSE.

THERE was a moment of contemplative⁰⁰⁰ silence. Beyond the circle of firelight the goats still tore and worried the dried leaves from the oak branches. A woman came leisurely forward and put an iron pan on the coals. When it was hot she brought scraps of pork and laid them in it. Rexh, the little Mohammedan, turned his head so that he should not smell that unclean meat. Frances said to Perolli, in a ravenous voice, "How much longer will it be before we can eat?"

He looked at her reprovingly. "In Albania it [576] is not polite to care about food."

"But it's past midnight and we've had nothing to eat since noon!" Frances mourned.

"Slowly, slowly, little by little," said Perolli, soothingly. For myself, I curled more comfortably among the blankets, too contented to ask for anything at all. It was as though I had returned to a place that I knew long ago and found myself at home there. I had forgotten that these people are living still in the childhood of the Aryan race and that I am the daughter of a century that is, to them, in the far and unknown

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ooo "I should say they're patient!" cried Frances. "Perolli, if you don't tell them we are simply dying of hunger, I will! It's almost two o'clock in the morning. Do they think we are made of—cast iron? I want something to eat, and I want to go to sleep. Do they intend to talk until morning?"

• [576] "It is the custom, when strangers come, to
[321] talk to them," said Perolli, severely. "Their only way of hearing news, and their only entertainment, is talking to guests. If you want to be rude about eating and sleeping, go ahead; I won't."

"Oh, all 'right," Frances relented, sadly. "Perolli, do you believe in ora?"

"Well—do you believe in heaven and hell, and God and the devil? There are lots of things in the world that you don't see or touch. I don't know——" He said, briskly, "Of course I don't believe in ora!" He wavered again. "But when you know so many people who have seen them and talked with them—I mean, who think they have—— Everyone used to believe such things, long ago, and perhaps, here in these mountains, where the people have changed so little through all the centuries, there may still be things—spirits, phantoms, whatever you like to call them. Understand, I don't believe it. But there may be something in that myth that's part of every religion, that there was a time when there were other beings on earth besides men. And if there were once, why then, if we could

CHAPTER VI

THE SONG OF THE FLIGHT OF MARKE GJLOSHI—
THE HUNTED MAN OF SHOSHI — THE WAY
THROUGH THE WOOD OF THE ORA—A WOMAN
WHO BELIEVES IN PRIVATE PROPERTY.

FOUR men of Marke Gjonn's household 000
went with us to carry the packs, so we left
the stone house peaceful on the cliff below our
upward-climbing path, not disturbing it with any
parting volley when we paused for our last
glimpse of it. A faint haze of blue smoke hung
over it, seeping through the slates of the roof;
there was no other sign of life about it, and only
the smoke distinguished it from the natural
rocks. Beside us the stream, which was the
waterfall, roared and glittered in the sunlight as
it fell into the depths; following with our gaze
its narrowing ribbon of silver and searching for
the blue smoke haze, we found the house, and I
would have had Cheremi fling down to it the
keen high call of farewell, ended by six times
three shots, that we had sent back to the bishop.

But no; there were only women left in the [576] ●
house, and how could I be so crude as to imagine
that one greeted women with rifle-shots?

We went on for a time over sunshiny uplands,
and I remember that day as a succession of sun

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000 walked on, seeing even with our untrained eyes that the "white coal" of those thousand streams is enough to turn every wheel in a reorganized Europe, and dreaming—dreams that will never be realized.

627 Then we saw the men stopping on the trail ahead, stopping with quick hands on their rifles, and, remembering in a strange kind of panic that [576] no one could be killed in the presence of a woman, I flung myself gasping up the slope, crying with my last half breath, "Long may you live!" to two strange men who appeared before us.

Then I collapsed, panting, on a grassy knoll, and dimly through my dizzy eyes I saw that the men, relaxing gladly, were sitting down around me and taking out their silver tobacco boxes.

"A Shoshi man," said Perolli, "with one of Pultit. I don't just get it; something to do with the blood feud. Let me listen."

We sat on the grassy knoll that seemed to be the edge at the end of the world, so far below it the valleys lay, and listened while the men of the tribes that were "in blood" talked easily together of unimportant matters and offered one another cigarettes.

The Shoshi man had taken off his turban and wore on his handsome head only the tiny round white cap, hardly larger than the curved palm of a hand, that covered his scalp lock. Around its edges the hair was shaved clean to the skull, and with his weather-browed face and scarlet sash bristling with knives he looked altogether the savage.

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423 the swiftest flicker of a glance, it was—I offered
578 her one. She took it, thanked me, lighted it from mine.

“A bold woman,” said Perolli.

“Why?”

[562] “In these mountains¹ the women smoke, but
[574] not before men; that is a man’s privilege, and it is unwomanly to smoke in their presence. Are you a woman?” he asked her, in Albanian.

“A woman of Pultit, married in Shala. A widow with two children, demanding justice from my tribe,” she said.

I looked about. There was nothing but snow and wet earth to sit on. Well, she must have been standing for hours, watching the goats. I leaned on my staff. “What justice?” said I.

She told us with a calm precision; none of her people’s rhetorical flourishes. Even through the barrier of language I could see that she was stating her case as a lawyer might who was not addressing a jury.

She had been married five years; she was twenty-one years old. She had two children—boys. While she was married her husband had built a house. It was a large house; two rooms. She had helped her husband build that house. With her own hands she had laid the slate on the roof. She liked that house. She had lived in it four years. Now her husband had been killed by the Serbs and she wanted to keep that house. She wanted to live in it, alone, with her two children.

¹[Albanian mountains-- [98] Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

A bridge of two logs, with railing of twisted 100 branches, ran from boulder to boulder across this incredible river, and we stood on it, gazing at these colors and at a cliff that rose before us, striped rose and green and gray and white in long jagged lines, as though it had been painted, when we heard overhead an outburst of cries, like a hundred sea gulls shrieking in a storm. We looked higher, and there on the top of the cliff we saw a score of boys, naked except for bright loin cloths, engaged in acrobatics. 526 576 609

They made pyramids of their wet white bodies; four, three, two, one, they stood on one another's shoulders, and the four who upheld the pyramid ran swiftly along the edge of the cliff, passing and circling about a similar pyramid; from top to top of the pyramids the top youths swung, passing each other in the air, landing on other shoulders, balancing, taking flight again. The pyramids melted, as though dissolved in the rain, and formed again, while all along the edge of the precipice other boys made a freize of living bodies, turning cart wheels, somersaulting over one another, walking on their hands.

We stood paralyzed. What did it mean? Then there was an explosion of shots; the cliffs around us crackled like giant firecrackers, the air seemed to fall in fragments around us, and through the din came multiplied shouts. Four tall chiefs appeared on the cliff trail, gorgeous in black and white and red and blue and green and silver. We were being welcomed to Thethis.

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 ing one another across ravines and from far mountain slopes.

● 576 "Yes," he said, "I am happy. I am happy, for Sadiri Luka¹ is a true Albanian, and when I go back to the plains I shall see that he is released from the price on his head which has been offered in Scutari."

"What!" we cried. Yes, he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, ten thousand kronen were officially offered for the head of Sadiri Luka.

"And he doesn't even carry a gun?"

"Why should he? He is among his own people. It is no shame to go unarmed among his own people. He would carry a rifle, certainly, if he had to go to Scutari."

"But you are from Scutari—we are all from Scutari—Cheremi, Rexh—and he asked us to his house?"

627 Perolli looked at us with scorn. We had been guests in the house of Sadiri Luka, he explained, with weary patience. If he had been twenty times a traitor to Albania, could a guest have killed him? And on the trail he had not carried a gun; no one could kill him, unarmed. He could go to Scutari in safety, if he went unarmed. But, of course, he would not do that, for that would be shameful. For two years he had been living in upper Thethis, unable to go to Scutari without risking his life, though he was a merchant, and poor, and could have made a business for himself in Scutari. But it had all been a mistake, said Perolli, which he would clear up.

¹[Perolli, secretary to Albanian [194] minister of Interior - Analyst]
²[of Thethis - - Analyst]

574 storied house, where a score of Zogist guerillas were gathered
[342] round the fire. The room was filled with smoke — for the house had no chimney, like many in Albania — and it was several minutes before I could see or breathe in comfort. I sat down, however, by the hearth, where a carpet had been spread, and while the evening meal was made ready had some talk with Petrit. He spoke quite good French, having studied in the French *lycée* at Korcha, where, by a strange irony, Enver Hoja had been his teacher. He was obviously eager for news of the outside world, and the flow of his questions was only restrained by his sense of courtesy as my host. In appearance he was not unlike his father, though of sturdier build and more slothful movements; and I was told that he had already distinguished himself in the previous autumn's fighting. He was possessed besides of a natural authority, and, despite his youth, seemed to command the respect of the wild mountaineers who accompanied him. Some of these spoke a little Italian or Serb, and their discussions that night gave me a first impression of [521] Zogist public opinion. The Ghegs are not great talkers like the Greeks or Slavs, but I felt, from what they said, that they were rather suspicious of British intentions and far more concerned with preventing the spread of Communism in Albania than with fighting the Germans. Towards one o'clock [262] our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the evening meal of soup, boiled mutton and cheese. We ate in silence [513] and as soon as we had finished I retired to rest on one of the mattresses which the master of the house had spread for us on the floor.

342 Next day, in the afternoon, Petrit accompanied me to the place where Abas Kupa had made his temporary headquarters. It was a grey stone keep, built on a jutting rib of the mountain range and approached by a path so narrow and precipitous that I had to send back my horse and make the last stage of the journey on foot. Abas Kupa came out to meet me, as I turned into the walled courtyard of the house, and welcomed me with the traditional greeting of "*Tungjatjeta*" — "May your life be prolonged". He led the way up a flight of wooden steps, resting like a ladder against the wall of the house, and took

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me by the hand into a dark and dusty room, hung with rifles and submachine-guns. It was thronged with Zogist notables and their bodyguards: wild and rugged men, corrugated with cartridge-belts, and festooned with pistols, daggers, and hand-grenades. Most of them were dressed in black, baggy Turkish breeches, braided homespun jackets of black or brown, with multicoloured sashes wound about their waists, and white fezes or skull-caps on their heads. A few besides were in uniform retained from the time of their service in the Albanian army, or looted from the Italians; while others, especially the leaders, wore tweed or leather jackets, variously combined with local or military costume.

We sat down, Turkish fashion, by the fire; and, while we drank coffee and exchanged greetings, the guerillas milled around, or sat together in small groups, whispering intently. To a stranger this whispering seemed sinister and blatantly conspiratorial, but the others took no offence at it. Necessity indeed imposed a communal way of life on the guerillas; each man was watched by his fellows in his every movement, and it was only by whispering that any privacy of discussion could be preserved.

I had been there perhaps half an hour when, at a sign from Abas Kupa, the guerillas filed out of the room, and we remained alone with Shaqir, my interpreter, and Colonel Murad Basha. Basha had been a regular officer under King Zog and had joined Abas Kupa in Belgrade in 1940. He was now the Zogist Chief-of-Staff, but struck me from the first as pedantic and too quick to see the difficulties in any scheme. He was indeed to prove a defeatist influence at the Zogist Headquarters, for, though personally no coward, he was terrified of action, like so many senior officers who have won their spurs on the square rather than in the field.

I began our discussions by showing Abas Kupa my credentials: these were a letter from Stirling, who had been his friend; and a *besa* given me by King Zog. This was a covenant enjoining upon all Albanians the duty of protecting my life and, should their zeal prove unavailing, of avenging my death. My *bona fides* thus established I recalled our meeting in Belgrade

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[521]669*
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[576]●

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~~Their houses~~ ^{varied in size and archi-} tecture with the wealth of the owners; but all were essentially ³⁴² built for defence. As a rule, they were so situated as to command a good field of fire over their chief approaches, and were often surrounded by walled courtyards entered through heavy, wooden gates studded with iron. For the most part they were of wood and stone, sometimes whitewashed, and consisted of two stories, joined by a narrow indoor staircase, or by a flight of wooden steps on the outside. The ground floor was the cattle and the women's quarters; above was the guest-room. This guest-room was the centre of the life of the house, and, except for a stout chest in which the valuables of the family were stored, was altogether empty of furniture. At one end of it was the open hearth from which the smoke escaped through chinks in the wall or, in statelier mansions, through a chimney. Narrow windows, usually without panes, served as a means of ventilation or, on occasion, as rifle slits; but so dim was the light which they diffused that it was often difficult to read indoors, even at midday. At night the room would be lit by the glow of the fire, or sometimes by oil lamps or pinewood torches.

On entering a house we ²would take off our boots and give up our rifles to the host, though retaining our side arms. As foreigners, we would then be led to the place of honour, which is on the right-hand side of the hearth, next to the wall. Abas Kupa would sit with us, or take the left-hand side, and the rest of the company, including bodyguards and orderlies, assembled in a horse shoe round the fire. The youngest sat at the apex of the horse shoe, and, since there were often a score of us, the evening would begin with much show of "Friend go up higher". We sat on carpets or sheepskin rugs, cross-legged or reclining against our saddle-bags. When all were seated, the host rolled cigarettes, which only non-smokers might refuse, and tossed them with unfailing accuracy to each guest. Presently a warm drink would be served, usually coffee, though in the poorer houses sweetened or salted milk was often brought instead. As outlaws we sought to keep our movements secret and our arrival was, as a rule, the first warning of our visit which the host received. Custom demanded that he serve us ⁵⁷⁴ ⁵⁷⁶ ²⁷⁶ ² [i.e. in the Mati valley -- Analyst]

² [British liaison officers in early 1944 -- Analyst]

Sons of the Eagle

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574 meat, and, since several hours might pass before the sheep or kid had been killed and made ready, it was often past midnight before we had eaten.

[533] While the meal was cooking we variously slept or talked and let the bodyguards dry damp clothes by the fire or massage our weary limbs. Sometimes, to beguile the time, one of the company would recite from the long epic poems in which the Albanians record the exploits of their heroes. They were weird, monotonous laments, sung in a high-pitched nasal voice to the accompaniment of a one-stringed mandolin. An hour [273] or so before the meal was served flasks of *raki* would be brought, accompanied by *mese* of onions, cheese, and sometimes hard-boiled eggs or lumps of grilled meat. *Raki* is a fiery, colourless spirit, made from the pulp of grapes, or sometimes, like *slivovitz*, from plums. Among the mountaineers it was usually home-brewed, and varied greatly in quality and strength. The principal guests would each receive a small flask, the shape of an old-fashioned burgundy flagon, and holding perhaps half a pint, while the rest of the company fared according to the resources of the host, sharing a flask between two or three. Toasts were drunk to the traditional greeting of "*Tungjatjeta*" — "May your life be prolonged"; and, though the mountaineers habitually drank to excess, they seldom failed to comport themselves with grave, if sometimes mellowed, dignity.

[21] When the cooking was done Maclean, as the chief guest, would be asked if the meal might be served; there was never conversation after meals, and so the greatest compliment which he could pay his host and fellows was to ask for a postponement. 264 As soon, however, as he had given his assent, a circular wooden table some five feet in diameter would be carried in, standing about six inches from the ground. Round this a dozen of us would assemble, sitting cross-legged, but in a crocodile, each sideways on to the table so as to make room for as many as possible. We would then each be given a spoon as our sole piece of cutlery and with this helped ourselves to the more liquid dishes at the centre of the table. There were no plates, so that each spoon plied steadily backwards and forwards

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between the individual mouth and the communal dish. More solid foods, such as meat or rice, were eaten with the fingers, and, since each dish was communal, those who ate slowly went hungry. The midday and evening meals were both known as "*buk*", or bread; for theoretically, and in the poorer houses practically, maize bread was the basic foodstuff, while the other dishes were regarded merely as sauces to make the bread more palatable. [24] 262

In the course of our journeys we touched life at many angles and experienced extremes of poverty and plenty. Often we were lucky to get even a lump of cheese and maize bread, or a cup of unsweetened milk. At other times, especially in Mati, we were surfeited by a wealthy host on successive dishes of eggs, boiled mutton, roast mutton *pilaf*, and luscious *halvas* and *baklavas* in the Turkish style. As a general rule, however, Albanian fare was lacking in variety and the average meal might be a soup of beans, a dish of boiled mutton, and a bowl of milk or *yoghourt*. The guest of honour usually received the sheep's head — the brain and eyes were considered the greatest delicacies — or sometimes the kidneys and the tail. Fatness was the quality most admired in sheep, though even with hard exercise all of us except Smiley found the enjoyment of lumps of hot boiled fat an acquired taste. Milk was the usual drink at meals, drunk like soup from a communal bowl and served as a last course. Water was also to be had, but only on request, for there was usually only one glass or mug in the house. Before and after meals the host came round with a basin and ewer, and the guests washed their hands — a most necessary proceeding seeing that these were used for eating. In the richer houses the washing water was warmed and home-made soap was also provided. Each man left the table when he had finished eating without waiting for his fellows; and when the chief guests had done there would be a "*deuxième service*" for the rest of the company, or sometimes two tables might be set at once. The guests had the right — and often used it — to criticise any meanness in their entertainment to their host's face; and he would never sit at table or taste food until the last of the guests had eaten. [576] • 264 [515]

road two loaded donkeys might meet and pass, but two loaded horses could not. When these met, one or the other had to step aside from the road, turning back, if need be to find a suitable place in which to do so. This was almost invariably of nature's making; there were no artificial passing places as on narrow motor roads in England.

Load generally determined priority of passage. To use Albanian phraseology, when a riding-saddle met a riding-saddle on a horse-track the one with no saddle-bags or other load besides the rider had to turn back. The riding-saddle had to make way for the loaded pack-saddle, but had priority over an empty one. When two pack-saddles met, the one loaded and the other empty, the latter had to make way for the former. When they were both loaded or both empty, the one which was nearer a possible place at which to step off the road had to turn back. The same rules applied to carts. In the rare cases where there was plenty of room for two loaded horses or carts, there was no 'Keep right' or 'Keep left'; they could pass on whichever side they wished.

The rules about priority were apt to be honoured in the breach rather than the observance. A man who was turned back on his road felt, even if priority was not his, as much disgraced as if his gun had been taken from him. His honour was lost, and could not be redeemed unless he killed his rival. There have been many deaths for the sake of precedence. The men of Godolesh, who were satisfied when the offender was fined by the elders, were condemned by their neighbours as soft and citified. But even in Godolesh there was no more fertile cause of murder than disputes about who should have the right of way. The trouble arose because priority rules were often confused, especially on purpose by strong wilful men, with the general law of road ownership. As enunciated by Father Gjeçov, this law said that a village street or a public highway was nobody's individual perquisite, but belonged to one man as much as to another. Hence, the living and the dead—traveller and livestock, bride and corpse—had an absolute right to use either, and no man, even if the road passed close to the door of his house, could deny this right.

A road was free to all. It was for breaking this general law that highway robbery was punished so much more severely than other forms of theft, and that a traveller who killed a dangerous dog on a highway did not have to compensate its owner.

554 [70] Modern civilization with its army and dense array of gendarmes and officials swept away the military and administrative functions of the bajraktar, but his social position remained untouched. So in Krasniqë, Sali Mena, the bajraktar in 1939, had the precedence because he descended from the eldest son of Gjô Vata of the village of Bunjaj; but Hakik Meta, the bajraktar of Lurë, remained inferior to Doçi, Nezhë and Vlad families in that tribe because their ancestors were from better families than his.

576 Social precedence was marked in several characteristically
554 Albanian ways. For instance, if the bajraktar of Perlat in Kthellë met a Simonaj and a Gjet-Kolaj at a feast, his seat would be third from the corner and his portion of meat only the leg. The Simonaj would sit in the corner and get the head and the Gjet-Kolaj would sit next to him and get the shoulder. Even in wartime a bajraktar was kept in his civilian place except during the actual fighting. On the way to and from the battlefield he sat in the seat and ate the portion of meat that appertained to him by descent. In 1935 Lurë was mustered to check a revolt at Fier in central Albania. The bajraktar's men carried the flag out of Lurë into Mat, and by arrangement met Zef Doçi's men at Burrel in Mat. There, though both were on a warlike errand, Zef Doçi sat in the chief seat and the bajraktar and his flag in the fourth. The revolt was suppressed before the tribesmen advanced beyond Burrel. If they had gone on, rifles would have cracked at Fier before Zef Doçi had to yield the first place to the bajraktar. If one of the bajraktars of Kthellë found it necessary to discuss something with one of the six 'good families', he could not ask its head to come and see him as he would an ordinary tribesman. Instead, he must gird up his own loins and go and see the other. If they disagreed during the discussion, he could not persist in his own view but had to fall in with the other's. Trivial though this insistence on correct precedence and its manifestations may seem, it had its value in maintaining tribal discipline. Slackening of the social framework in communities so backward as these tribesmen would only have ended in anarchy.

[619] The 'first families' excepted, the bajraktar was unquestioned first among the tribesmen, this being signified in the usual manner of corner seat and choicest portion of meat. Any male of his family old enough to walk enjoyed the same precedence and was, by the courteous and diplomatic, addressed as 'bajraktar'.

BAJRAKTARS

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A 'bajraktar' of tender years could evict a greybeard commoner⁵⁷⁶ from the corner seat, and the greybeard would be distressed if⁵⁵⁴ left in it. A worthless and ignorant 'bajraktar' got the head of the roast lamb while successful and learned commoners had no precedence by right—they belonged to their father's tribe and were counted aliens in the bajraktar's. Sometimes, however, the tribesmen gave them precedence as a courtesy.

When a bajraktar or any male in his family, infants excepted,⁷⁶⁴ died in his bed, a black flag was stuck at the head of his grave to mark his rank during life. Otherwise he and his were treated in death like ordinary mortals. If he himself was murdered, the⁶²⁸ ensuing blood feud was no worse than it would have been for a commoner—Lek had laid down that in death one man was as good as another. Besides, another bajraktar succeeded him and with the office continuing, the personality of the holder had no special significance. His family alone had to show a sense of his unusual importance; it could not stain its honour by accepting blood money instead of killing the assassin. If a bajraktar was killed by somebody in another tribe, his tribe undertook to hunt down the assassin, but this was no more than it would have done for any tribesman dead in comparable circumstances. Conversely, when a bajraktar killed anyone, his victim's family sought his blood precisely as they would have sought a commoner's.

As between bajraktars, seniority of the ancestor's appointment⁵⁷⁶ determined precedence. Gjejaj of Dukaj, the first bajraktar in⁵⁵⁴ Perlat, lived long before there was a bajraktar of Rrshen. His modern representative was, as already said above, so weak that Perlat had abandoned him to follow the Rrshen man's leadership. Yet in everything social, by virtue of his ancestor's seniority, he walked ahead of his supplanter. Once, however, a Kthellë tribesman entertained all three bajraktars of his tribe together. There is no record of how he seated them, but when the roast lamb appeared, he split the head in two, gave the two halves to two of the bajraktars and a shoulder to the third. Half a head being reasonably equated to a shoulder, he thus gave equal honour to all three men and did justice both to descent and to strength.

When a bajraktar encountered a beg, as a bey is called in north Albania, the latter sat in the corner because a beg is bigger than a bajraktar. When bajraktar and agha met, the bajraktar sat in the corner. Such a meeting was rare in the north owing to the paucity

554 of aghas. The title of agha was a courtesy title bestowed by the
 576 populace. By special provision of the Turkish Government there
 had been hereditary aghas since the Turkish conquest at Botush
 in Yugoslav Kosovë; these, says their representative in Albania,
 took precedence of all bajraktars in Albania and Kosovë.

578 Given the pride of a bajraktar in his standard and of a 'first
 668 family' in its descent, a clash between the two was not uncommon.
 When this took the form of an ordinary isolated quarrel, elders
 were called in from another tribe to judge between the disputants.
 Their own tribe did not venture to try the issue, knowing that it
 might suffer, as outside elders could not do, for an unwelcome
 judgement. If the elders failed to effect a settlement, shooting
 began between the parties, both bajraktar and 'first family' being
 followed by his own kin. A man related to both followed the one
 to whom he was more nearly related; this at least in theory. In
 practice they often showed a naive sense of which side their bread
 was buttered and joined the disputant with the stronger following.

628 Sometimes a long struggle for precedence developed between
 662 'first family' tenacious of its ancient privileges and an ambitious
 578 bajraktar. In Lurë, for instance, both the Catholic Zef Doçi of
 Lurë e Vjetër (Old Lurë) and the Mohammedan Ibrahim Gjoçi of
 Kreje had long been rivals of the Mohammedan bajraktar Hakik
 Aliu Meta. In 1926 Gjoçi had the largest following, because he
 maintained the tribe with surpassing generosity. Within a decade
 he ate himself out of house and home, and then lost nearly all his
 power, retaining only the tribesmen's affection and respect for his
 past benefits. He therefore ceased to hamper the ambitions of the
 bajraktar. Zef Doçi, the 'first family' in the whole tribe, was a more
 obstinate rival, as his power rested less on his lavish doles than on
 his descent and personal wisdom. Ancestor after ancestor had been
 'captains' in Turkish times, whereas Gjoçi and Meta had never
 been 'captains' till created by King Zog. The bajraktar began by
 undermining Doçi's position with traditional doles. He sent sheep
 to the poor at every festival and went guarantee for them in the
 shops during crises such as weddings and burials. 'So they all
 follow me now', he told the visitor with disarming simplicity. He
 had resorted to direct action, seizing every chance to kill off the
 guns in Doçi's family. In 1933 some brigands, who had killed one
 of Llesh Doçi's men, were harboured in a mountain sheepfold by
 the bajraktar's shepherds. Together with Zef and other relatives,

Assemblies of tribe or village watched above all over their honour. Sometimes their interpretation of honour took strange lines. Father Gječov gives the following story from the Mirditë tribe of Spaç. The sister of a villager of Gomsiqe was married to a villager of Dush in the same tribe. It happened that on one occasion when she came to pay a visit to her brother she took ill and died. He and his friends laid her on a bier and carried her, not to their own cemetery, but to her husband's house in Dush, presumably to avoid the expense of burying her. When the village heard what they had done, they met in General Assembly, and after carefully appraising the dishonour brought on Gomsiqe by such a public exhibition of meanness, fined the man a cow. This they divided into fifteen portions, which they distributed among the fifteen houses of the village. The fine was justice at its most precise. If the man had buried his sister as he should have done, the funeral feast would have cost him a cow. The event took place about 1903.

Another type of meanness had a similar end. About 1872 a villager of Urë e Shtrejtë in the tribe of Drisht happened to call on a neighbour about midday and was kept for dinner. As they finished, his host scraped his plate. The visitor afterwards complained to the village of the disgrace brought on his own dinner-table by the host. The village met in General Assembly and fined the host 500 grosh for his meanness. According to the law 'a dinner-table is disgraced in a guest's eyes when the host wipes or licks the porringer or scrapes his plate'.

The smallest General Assemblies—those of brotherhoods and households—dealt with what were essentially family matters. They met perhaps to decide on expelling or even killing any hopeless member if his misdeeds were serious enough to threaten the whole brotherhood or household with wholesale punishment by the tribe. They considered the pros and cons of buying an extra bit of land.

Tribal government was entirely democratic—of the people, by the people and for the people, but it differed from tribe to tribe and from time to time, enough to prevent unity. As the tribes in general would not have accepted the law of any one of them as supreme, it was ultimately necessary for Albanian unity that tribal government should be superseded by a modern system evolved in, and exercised from, a capital.

To the Land of the Eagle

○○○field for their breakfast of maize, and soon afterwards the work of placing the packs in position was begun. At 5.30 we bade the shepherd farewell, and, leaving the driver to bring the horses along after us, set out on foot down the trail.

● 576 When in Montenegro I had been struck by the friendly attitude of the peasants we met. There they were always ready with a smile and a cheery "Dobar dan!" But it was quite otherwise in Albania, where no salutations were given or expected and the peasants regarded us with a suspicious stare. I several times attempted a greeting, but [593] it never elicited any response. Greetings between relations, however, are warm enough if they are all like one I witnessed on the morning about which I am writing. A young Yankee-speaking Albanian had attached himself to our party and was waiting with us at the bottom of a hill for the rest of the pack-train to come up when he saw an old man driving two mules along the trail towards him. "That my pop", he said. And he ran forward and not only shook the old man warmly by the hand but kissed him on both cheeks with every sign of affection.

○○○ An hour's trek brought us to a place which I understood was called "Chokus". The name as spelt on the board over the police post began with a Q and ended with a T, and how it came to be pronounced "Chokus" I cannot imagine. Here the gendarme handed in my way-bill and was replaced by a substitute, an oldish man for whom I was sorry later on. He started out literally at a moment's notice to trudge on foot the whole day's journey to Elbasan, there

Montenegrins EF5

Serbs EFL

Bulgaria EE1

Some Balkan Taboos. Iron. Hair

began and I was propitiated on all sides. It was the thing to ask me into the nearest house and stuff me with food, and for days my hotel bills were almost nil. But that was in the days of the Obrenovitch, when the Karageorgevitchs had been exiled for ever and ever for having murdered Prince Michael. They now reign over wide lands for having murdered the Archduke Ferdinand.

We, too, have a stranger craze. We still hedge the stranger with difficulties until, or unless, we think fit to feast him at the Guildhall, hoping earnestly that by thus feeding the beast we may induce him to work magic in our favour with tariffs or arm his compatriots on our behalf.

2. THE NAME TABOO

Among many primitive races all the world over a man's name is part of himself. Just as spells to hurt a man may be wrought by means of bits of his hair or nails, so, too, can evil be worked by using his name. The name is, therefore, a thing to be carefully guarded. Thus is the name taboo explained by authorities on the subject.

The taboo is common in the Balkans. In 1904, among the Bulgars of Macedonia, I had to classify long lists of refugees. Woman after woman would give her name as "Maria," and refuse, with tears running down her cheeks, to give her husband's name, or any clue to her identity, save perhaps the name of her father in a distant village. "They are ashamed. You must not ask such a thing," I was told. I had asked an indecent question and hurt their feelings. "Ask another woman." The Maria in question would hurry from the room, while I learnt from a woman of the same village that the husband's name was Dmitri, son of George. This constantly happened when I have dealt with Bulgar and Albanian refugees. The explanation always is that they are "modest."

In Montenegro the custom was nearly dead—but not quite. Old folk still thought it improper for man and wife to name each other. The schoolmaster at Tzrmnitza told me that there were still many who had never done so. Savo Vuletitch, himself a Montenegrin, in one of his admirable tales of Montenegro, tells how "Petar Radisitch, though he had lived on the best of terms with his wife for full twenty years, had never called her by her name, nor even spoken to her as a human being, on any subject, if it were possible for a stranger to overhear. Had he to speak to her in public he muttered through his teeth, and she did the same by him. To have done otherwise would have been shameful."

A plan I found adopted was that the man gave his order in the

Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

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262 to them. Any women sitting by the roadside when a man passed at
264 once arose and gave humble greeting. Krsto always was very lordly on
562 these occasions. He always ate with me—partly, I think, to convince
576 himself he was not my servant but my equal. Poor Iké fed apart
afterwards. Once when he was absent a week I begged her to feed
with me, for it was ridiculous to make two meals of it. But the mere
idea of doing anything so unseemly distressed her so that she burst
into tears and prayed me to excuse her. She said it was a thing that
could not be done; it would "shame" me.

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576 For a man to wait on a woman was very humiliating. A mounted
562 gendarme, a Bosnian Moslem, was once ordered to escort me in Turkish
554 territory. He had conscientious scruples about obeying a woman.
After a midday halt at a "kavana," he hurried down to get the horses
ready, leaving his rifle on the balcony. Presently he shouted up to no
one in particular, "Give me my rifle." As it was alongside of me I
handed it down. His ruse had succeeded, and he cried with childish
glee, "She has waited on me! she has waited on me!" Honour
was satisfied.

A
554 Among the Albanian tribesmen it was considered very degrading to
264 eat with a woman. I remember how a Kastrati man jeered at the
Austrian Consul. A poor creature, indeed. He drank coffee and ate
meat and bread, and let his wife eat at the same time. A shameless
woman! A despicable man. The Kastrati man would not let his wife
so misbehave. He would never eat with a woman, not he.

A
[186] It is amusing how often ambassadors, generals, admirals, ministers,
and other exalted beings are looked down on with contempt by the native
whose respect and admiration they fondly imagine they are arousing.

When I arrived at Vuthaj, a Moslem Albanian village, where they
had never before entertained a strange female, there was a very long
powwow as to the correct course to pursue. I had gone there on the
invitation of a headman. It was decided that I was too important
a guest to feed with the harem. I was to rank as a man and feed with
the chiefs. But in order to comply with their sense of fitness I was
helped last of all, even after my horse-boy. And so honour was satisfied.
The women waited at table—unveiled—but I did not enter their
apartment and had no communication with them.

A
[576] Among the Christian Mirdites at the house of the Kapetan, where
I was treated with great honour, the younger men of the family waited
at table, as did Chaucer's Squire, and no woman was allowed to come
near me at all. I heard a giggling crowd trying to get a peep at me
through the crack of the door, but they were chivied away by a male,
and my suggestion that I should see them was met by the statement
that they were too modest.